

REMARKS

In the Office action mailed October 6, 2004 ("Office Action") the Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, and 10, objected to claims 2, 3, and 7, and did not consider claims 4-6 and 8. This reply reinstates claims 4-6, amends claims 2-4, 6, and 7, and cancels claims 1 and 8-10. Therefore claims 2-7 are pending and under consideration.

I. Response to §102(b) rejection of claims 1 and 9-10.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). This issue is now moot because claims 1 and 9-10 are canceled.

II. Response to objection of claims 2, 3, and 7

The Examiner objected to claims 2, 3, and 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and determined that claims 2, 3, and 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

This reply cancels base claim 1 and rewrites claim 2 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore claim 2 is allowable.

Claims 3 and 7 depend upon claim 2. Therefore claims 3 and 7 are allowable for at least the same reason claim 2 is allowable.

III. Regarding claims 4-6

This reply reinstates claims 4-6. Claims 4-6 are allowable at least because they depend directly or indirectly on allowed independent generic claim 2.

IV. Regarding claim 8

Although the Applicants elected claim 8 for examination in the response filed February 4, 2004, claim 8 is not mentioned in either the Office Action or the Office Action Summary. Therefore, it appears that the Examiner failed to consider claim 8.

This reply cancels claim 8 in order to expedite allowance. As claim 8 is cancelled to expedite allowance and not in response to a rejection, the Applicants believe that the cancellation of claim 8 should not effect the interpretation of any other claims in the application.

V. Conclusion

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: David M. Pitcher
David M. Pitcher
Registration No. 25,908

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501